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RUZEHAA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [NG](#)

SUBJECT: NIGER: FIGHTING IN THE NORTH AND EAST

Classified By: Donald W. Koran, CDA, reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Fighting in the North

[¶1.](#) (U) The GON's long awaited offensive against the MNJ has apparently begun. There have been reports of fighting in several locations in the north. As is usually the case, the GON and MNJ provide contradictory reports of events, particularly regarding casualties. Much has been made of the MNJ claims to have captured the town of Gougaram, although it appears that it did so only after government forces withdrew from the town. It's not clear if either the GON or the MNJ control the town now.

[¶2.](#) (U) The MNJ claims that GON forces have committed serious human rights abuses, including torture and extrajudicial killings, in its recent operations. Amnesty International issued a statement which largely tracks with the MNJ claims. GON spokesman Ben Omar dismissed the AI report and said there was no need to investigate the allegations.

Fighting in the Southeast

[¶3.](#) (C) The MNJ website on April 8 reported that the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the Sahara (known by its French acronym FARS) attacked GON forces near Lake Chad April 4 and 5, killing seven soldiers and capturing six. This comes a few days after the MNJ web site ran a communique purportedly from the FARS expressing its support for the MNJ. The GON has not commented publicly on the incident, but military sources describe the incident as a chance encounter between the security forces and traffickers, which resulted in one death on each side.

[¶4.](#) (U) The FARS is a predominately Toubou group. The Toubou are a nomadic people who straddle the Niger/Chad border. They also fought the GON in the early 1990s, in loose association with the various Tuareg groups under the umbrella of the Organization of Armed Resistance (known by the French acronym ORA). There are conflicting reports regarding the relationship of the group that currently claims to be the FARS and its 1990s predecessor. According to one report, the FARS are currently demanding that the GON provide information on the death of one of their former leaders.

[¶5.](#) (U) Minimize considered
KORAN